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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

##### CHP Ready to Push the Button for Early Polls

Today's papers draw attention to the words of CHP leader Deniz Baykal that CHP lawmakers could resign to trigger early elections. Left-leaning daily Cumhuriyet reports Baykal said that discord between AKP and the Turkish public was growing. According to the politician, people who do not believe in the constitution cannot become president in Turkey.

##### Hirant Dink Hearing Adjourned due to Protests

Cumhuriyet, Radikal: The first session of Agos newspaper editor Dink's case was postponed because of protests by nationalist groups against Dink and his lawyers. Dink, Editor-in-Chief of Turkish-Armenian bilingual daily Agos, and writer Aydin Engin are being tried on charges of 'interfering with the legal process' over two articles that appeared in the daily last November.

##### Greek Organization Demands Turkey Apologize for Pontus 'Genocide'

Milliyet reports the Greek-based Federation of Pontus Organizations said it would submit a file to EU officials in Brussels, claiming some 400,000 Pontus Greeks were killed by the Ottomans in Turkey's Black Sea region between 1914-23. Yorgo Parharidis, the chairman of the Federation, said Turkey must apologize for the Pontus 'genocide.' Parharidis noted a 'World Pontus Hellenism Congress' would be convened in Athens in June.

##### Gul and Rice Agree to Diplomat Exchange Program

Sabah reports that during US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Ankara, after agreeing on the Strategic Vision document, Turkey and the US agreed on an interesting cooperation plan, which had been kept secret until now. According to Sabah, from now on a Turkish Diplomat will have

a permanent office in the US State Department and similarly, a Turkish-speaking American diplomat with expertise in Turkey from the State Department will be placed in the Foreign Ministry in order to help with the possible crises which might occur between Turkey and the US.

#### PM Erdogan's Possible Visit to the US

Radikal reports that Foreign Ministry and Prime Ministry advisers have started planning for PM Erdogan's visit to the US. FM Abdullah Gul and PM Erdogan either will fly to the US together at the end of June or the beginning of July, or Gul will go to the US after the EU summit in Luxembourg on June 12-13, to make preparations for the PM's visit. According to Radikal, while Erdogan holds talks with President Bush, Gul might hold meetings with the US State Department. If President Bush's schedule does not permit a visit in June or July, then Erdogan might postpone his visit to September.

#### Commentary on Iraq, Libya

Mete Cubukcu wrote on the deteriorating situation in Iraq in the leftist Birgun: "Five months after the elections the government in Iraq has almost been finalized, but at the same time Shiites have started using violence against the Sunnis. There are ongoing massacres of Sunnis while the US has also been involved in the situation by forming Shiite-origin death squads. According to recent reports, Iraqi security units are incapable of controlling 'certain forces' which also indicates that Iraq has started suffering from a dirty civil war followed by a dirty occupation. At this point, the story in the American Hartford Courant adds another negative dimension. It looks like American forces serving in Iraq will soon start suffering from an Iraq

ANKARA 00002812 002 OF 002

syndrome. Along with other consequences, the US will have to bear an unexpectedly high human cost because of this war."

Yilmaz Oztuna, writing in the conservative Turkiye, applauds Libyan leader Khaddafi for changing course and joining the international community: "The resumption of diplomatic ties between US and Libya and the removal of Libya's name from the terrorist states list are significant successes and the Libyan leader Khaddafi deserves credit. He was smart enough to make a radical change in Libya's policy following the developments in Iraq. He not only stopped the weapons of mass destruction program but also asked Washington to participate in the BMENAI process. Khaddafi did the right thing and saved his country from further troubles."

#### TV Highlights

NTV (7 a.m.)

#### Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said the ruling AK Party government's policies had not changed with respect to Turkey's EU aspirations, but complained that the issue had dropped from the agenda of the media and the nation.

- Farming Minister Osman Pepe told the ambassadors of EU countries that EU funds extended to Turkey should amount at least to the funds extended to the ten new members of the bloc in their accession process.

- Eight barrels of toxic waste have been found in Istanbul's Kirac neighborhood.

#### International News

- A report by Council of Europe said ? Turkish Cypriots face racism and discrimination under the Greek Cypriot administration.

- Dutch lawmaker Ayaan Hirsi Ali announced she has quit politics and would be leaving the Netherlands since her

citizenship has been revoked.

- US President Bush has announced plans to deploy 6,000 National Guards along the border with Mexico.

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